

Healthy Lunch Box Top Tips.

(These top tips go alongside the top tips for good oral hygiene and healthy eating.)

Paint Pots provides a mid-morning and afternoon snack consisting of a range of fruit, vegetables, toast, and crumpets. For a full list of snacks provided, please ask the staff.

If you bring a lunch box into preschool, we ask that you make it as healthy as possible with a manageable amount of food for your child.

A portion for a child is based on what they can hold in their hand.

It is vitally important that children eat well in early life, not only to provide them with the nutrients they need to grow and develop but also for their lifelong health. With almost a quarter of children starting school overweight or obese, children's health in the early years needs to be a key focus in tackling the obesity epidemic.

We are absolutely committed to giving children the best start to life. We know how important a balanced diet is in shaping a healthy lifestyle and getting this right in early childhood is key.

Alongside exercise and activities that allow our children to be active, where better to start than at preschool and helping our children understand that exercise and being active can be really good fun and to understand what healthy foods are and how good they can be for their health in the long term.

Here are some top tips on providing a healthy lunch for your child. If you need any further advice or support on healthy food, activities, or fussy eaters, please don't hesitate to speak to a member of the team who will be happy to help.

Top Tips:

We are Nut Free!

Please could we ask that you refrain from putting anything with nuts in, as we may have children with nut allergies, **we are a nut free environment!**

Get them involved.

Get your child involved in preparing and choosing what goes in their lunchbox. They are more likely to eat it if they helped make it.

Variety is the spice of lunchboxes! Be adventurous and get creative to mix up what goes in their lunchbox.

Keep them fuller for longer.

Base the lunchbox on foods like wholegrain bread and pasta. Choose wholegrain where you can. If your child doesn't like wholegrain, try making a sandwich from one slice of white bread and one slice of wholemeal/brown bread.

Freeze your bread.

Keep a small selection of bread in the freezer. Make lunchboxes more interesting by using different shapes, like bagels, pittas and wraps, and different types of bread, such as granary, wholemeal and multi-grain.

DIY lunches.

Wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting for children when they get to put them together. Dipping foods such as hummus are also fun and make a change from a sandwich each day.

Less spread.

Cut down on the spread used and try to avoid using mayonnaise in sandwiches.

Cut back on fat.

Pick lower fat sandwich fillings, such as lean meats (including chicken or turkey), fish (such as tuna or salmon), reduced-fat cream cheese, and reduced-fat hard cheese.

Ever green.

Always add salad such as cucumber to sandwiches – it all counts towards your child's 5 A DAY.

Always add veg.

Cherry tomatoes or sticks of carrot (please cut carrots in sticks as circles are a choking hazard), cucumber, celery and peppers all count towards their 5 A DAY. Adding a small pot of reduced-fat hummus help with getting children to eat vegetables.

Cut down on crisps.

If your child really likes crisps, try reducing the number of times you include them in their lunchbox and swap for homemade plain popcorn or plain rice cakes instead.

Swap the sweets.

Swap cakes, chocolate, cereal bars and biscuits for malt loaf, fruited teacakes, fruit breads or fruit (fresh, dried or tinned – in juice not syrup).

Go low fat and lower sugar.

Go for low-fat and lower sugar yoghurt or fromage fraise and add your own fruit.

Check your cheese.

Cheese can be high in fat and salt so choose stronger-tasting ones – and use less of it – or try reduced-fat varieties of cheese.

Add bite-size fruit.

Try chopped apple, peeled satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, chopped pear, quartered grapes or melon slices to make it easier for them to eat.

Watch the teeth!

Dried fruit counts towards your 5 a day but can stick to teeth so should only be eaten at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Top Tips from <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes>